

**Tulane National Primate Research Center Investigation
Deputy Administrator Visit
April 2015**

Background:

In November of 2014, two non-human primates (rhesus macaques) at Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC) were infected with *Burkholderia pseudomallei* (Bp) and one of them was euthanized. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Bp is not transmitted between humans or animals making the likelihood of becoming ill from the bacteria low. TNPRC was unsure how the macaques became infected. CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) were brought in to investigate. On January 26, 2015 EPA was asked by CDC, USDA and the State of Louisiana to develop a sampling plan for suspected releases of the bacteria in the area around the monkey cages and to provide alternative ideas for decontamination. In the first week of February, air, water and soil samples were collected in targeted areas around the enclosures where the bacteria would most likely be present. TNPRC implemented the plan and CDC conducted the laboratory analysis and Quality assurance. On February 20, 2015 CDC announced that all samples were negative for the presence of live or dead Bp. On March 13, CDC released a statement saying, "CDC has found no evidence to date to suggest the organism was released into the surrounding environment and therefore it's unlikely there is any threat to the general population."

Status:

State of Louisiana and TNPRC requested additional discussion by EPA regarding decontamination plans for the soils in the field cages. Region 6 and the EPA Consequence Management and Advisory Division (CMAD) staff provided additional technical advice on the development of the decontamination plan. The LDEQ is responsible for permitting outfalls. If Tulane wishes to develop sampling plans for these areas, EPA has offered to provide comments to the State.

Next Steps:

Region 6 and CMAD will provide advice TNPRC and the State of Louisiana as they develop Sampling and Analysis plans for future sampling events which coincide with the USDA livestock and wildlife sampling and monitoring activities. CDC has asked CMAD to develop guidance on the experience that may be applicable to the organisms of concern under the biowatch program.